Members of the academic staff of the Faculty for the Built Environment were recently invited for the Final Conference of the European Science Foundation COST Action TU0701 held in Ferrara Italy and hosted by the Department of Architecture of the University of Ferrara. Perit Ruben Paul Borg, Dr Vince Buhagiar and Dr Paul Gauci, of the Faculty for the Built Environment have been participating in the research group within the European Science Foundation - COST Action: Improving the Quality of Suburban Building Stock, for the past 4 years. The group addressed in particular building refurbishment strategies, quality assessment methodologies and quality standards in suburban housing.

Suburban building estates make up a large part of the European Urban heritage. Most of the buildings generally consist of multi-family housing blocks consisting of small apartments, which were completed after 1950 using low-cost technologies. Consequently they are characterised by poor quality and building defects. The aim of the research group was to investigate methods and technologies used in the rehabilitation and renovation of suburban housing settlements, intended to increase their value, and to improve safety and the quality of life of the inhabitants.

Perit Ruben Paul Borg is the Vice Chairman of the research group’s Work Group 2 and is in charge of coordinating the scientific activities concerning strategies for the assessment of quality and refurbishment and quality standards in the building stock and the built environment.

A number of reviewed scientific reports and books concerning the Quality of Building Stock and the Built Environment were published and edited by the research group and presented at the conference. The main research publications include the book “Suburbanscapes” (Published by Alinea Italy, 2012) and the second volume in a two volume series “Improving the Quality of Suburban Building Stock” (Published by UnifePress Italy, 2012), of which Perit Borg and Dr Gauci were co-editors and responsible for the scientific coordination. The first volume in the series had been coordinated and published in Malta by the Department of Civil and Structural Engineering of the University of Malta, on the occasion of the international conference in Valletta in 2010. Both volumes include a comprehensive collection of the most recent developments in research on quality assessment methods and refurbishment strategies covering the suburban building stock and housing, with contributions from the foremost European experts.

Perit Joseph Galea, of the Faculty for the Built Environment was appointed by COST European Science Foundation, in Brussels as an Evaluator of the COST Action and the research work conducted during the past 4 years of activity. COST in Malta is coordinated by the Malta Council for Science and Technology.

For more information on this conference please contact Ruben Paul Borg, Department of Civil & Structural Engineering, University of Malta. ruben.p.borg@um.edu.mt
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